The Place of Ramanuja in the Story of India.

BY

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THE PLACE OF RAMANUJA IN THE STORY OF INDIA,

AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED BY

PROFESSOR K. SUNDARARAMA IYER, Esq., M.A.,

OF KUMBAKONAM,

ON THE OCCASION OF THE

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OF THE

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AND

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SRINIVASA MANDIRAM.

Under the auspices of the Sreenivasa Mandiram, Professor K. Sundara Rama Iyer, M.A., of Kumbakonam, delivered a lecture on "The Placé of Sri Ramanuja in the Story of India", in the Janopakari Doddanna Hall, City, in the presence of an unusually large gathering, yesterday evening, (4th May, 1911) under the presidency of Mr. J. S. Chakravarthi, M.A., F.R.A.S., Comptroller to the Government of Mysore. The hall and the entrance were gaily decorated with flags and bunting. An Indian band was in attendance at the gate. The members of the Ladies' Association entertained the audience with vocal and instrumental music. Swami Nirmalananda, Sir P. N. Krishnamurti, K.C.S.I., ex-Dewan of Mysore; Dr. and Mrs. R. Iyengar, Messrs. V. P. Madhava Row, C.I.E., K. P. Puttanna Chetty, H. V. Nanjundiah, B. J. Kumarasami Naick, F. J. Richards, Venkata Pathi Iyengar, Chengiah Chetty, C. Srinivasa Iyengar, S. Narayana Row, Sundra Murthi Mudaliar, C. Krishnamurthi and other members of the Bar, D. B. Ramachandra Mudaliar, N. Subba Row, S. N. Subba Row, S. Krishnaswami Iyengar, M. T. Narayana Iyengar, K. Ramachandra Row and other Professors, Mylari Row, Hiriannian and the Assistant Secretaries to the Govt. were amongst the audience.

The orphans of the Mandiram Orphanage sang the invocation. One of the members of the Ladies' Association sang to the accompaniment of the harmonium, a song from Mukundamala. The Chairman read a letter from H. H. the Yuvaraja of Mysore, expressing his deep regret at being unable to attend in person on the occasion.

With the permission of the Chairman, Mr. A. Gopalacharlu read the report of the Mandiram in the

course of which he expressed his deep regret in the matter of the demise of King Edward VII and R. B. A. Maigandadeva Mudaliar, and also stated that on those occasions special offerings of worship were conducted in the Mandiram for the repose of the departed souls. The Chairman then introduced the lecturer to the audience, who then delivered the following lecture.

Note to the Reader.

My main aim in this lecture is not to give an account of Sri Ramanujacharya's religion and philosophy but the very limited one of indicating his place in the story of India. My view is that in the leading crisis and revolutions of Indian history, the Vedic religion and tradition as interpreted by Sri Ramanuja have helped to preserve social unity or to restore it after a period of social unrest or disintegration. This will become clear when the whole of the lecture has been studied. References to Ramanuja are made wherever necessary for elucidating the purpose in view.

K. SUNDARARAMA AIYAR.

Professor K. SUNDARARAMA IYER'S ADDRESS

ON

The Place of Sri Ramanuja in the Story of India.

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,—

I am highly thankful to our respected fellow-citizen in the Chair for the kind and complimentary terms in which he has introduced me to you. I had long heard from visitors and other sources of information of Srimad Gopalacharya Swami's self-denying labours in maintaining and developing this religious and charitable institution. When, therefore, he invited me, first last year and again this year, to undertake the function of delivering this address at the Annual Celebration of the birthday of Sri Ramanujacharya, I felt that, however unworthy I was and am of the honor of occupying a position which my eminent predecessors have illustrated with the splendour of their name, erudition and oratory and however much I may be wanting in the qualifications needed for speaking in the presence of the many great men who are assembled in this hall, I felt that a call from one who has so long stood manfully at his post and done this great work for Sri Krishnarpanam was a call inspired by the blessed Bhagavan Himself and that therefore I must respond to it. I beg you will excuse me for my weakness in yielding to Mr. Gopala Charlu's call in a moment of unthinking impulse, overlook my undoubted shortcomings, and grant me your kind indulgence during the few minutes I shall occupy this platform.

We are fated to live in a time of ferment due to the conflict of many voices, purposes and activities, and we have to meet the situation and find ways and means for securing the peace and unity we need. There is a good deal of disturbance and discord all round. At this moment of mental agitation and social unrest, I for one believe that it is a great blessing that we have in our

present rulers a race of men gifted not only with political sagacity and political sympathy, but also with the iron will and resolute purpose needed to put down the forces of disorder and to deal mercilessly and mercifully with all disturbers of the peace.

In the age of Buddhistic rebellion, the conflict came from within. For nearly 500 years of Buddhistic predominance the ferment, disturbance and dislocation were almost unprecedented in history. Everywhere minds of a certain type have a fatal fascination for a bewitching personality or a seemingly comprehensive theory or principle. In the case of the Buddha—mind, by the bye, that not only our *puranic* Buddha preceded, while the founder of Buddhism followed, the lovely and holy *avatara* of Sri Krishna, but also His mission which was to prevent *avaidikas* from taking to Vedic religion was the exact reverse or counterpart of that of the founder of Buddhism—a magnetic personality, sweet and gentle beyond measure, combined with teaching such as is always attractive to highly emotional, or soaringly rationalistic, minds. When we speak of the Buddhistic religion, we must carefully distinguish between the teaching of Sakya Muni himself and its subsequent developments. The former ignored—in fact it also denied—the existence of an eternal soul and God. Everything in the universe is in a dynamic state of flux and transformation. Nothing is permanent,—not even the self which is for all of us a datum of consciousness and the basis of all aspiration, activity, or achievement.

“ सर्वस्य आत्मा स नकेन चित्प्रत्याख्यातुं शक्यः ।
य एव निराकर्ता तस्यैव आत्मत्वात् ॥ ”

“ సర్వస్య ఆత్మా సనకేన చిత్ప్రత్యాఖ్యాతుం శక్యః ।
యఏవ నిరాకర్తా తస్యైవ ఆత్మత్వాత్ ॥ ”

"It is the self of all, and so cannot be denied by any one. Whoso is the denier, it is the very self of him." The Buddhist resolutely denies this. As everything in the universe is transient (*anitya*), as there is not even a permanent self, man can only have peace by abandoning striving of all kinds—even the striving after the realisation and perfection of the self. Every one is called on to abandon the world, or live to help those who can muster the courage to do so. The rich have their miseries quite as much as the poor, and the only way open to us to escape the miseries of life is to join the Sangha, the Buddhistic fraternity of monks and nuns and to practise the life of ascetic discipline prescribed for them by the Buddha so as thereby to gain the supreme bliss and peace of Nirvana. This teaching is still to a great extent preserved in the Hinayana or Southern School of Buddhism, and so it must be regarded as representing the Sugata's true teaching, while the Mahayana or Northern School made such wide departures from it that it may be said to be a new religion altogether. In the Diamond Sutra, Buddha is said to have addressed the following prediction to his disciples:—"Five hundred years after my death there will arise a religious prophet who will lay the foundation of his teaching not on one, two, three, four, or five Buddhas, but on the Fountain of all the Buddhas; when that one comes, have faith in him and you will receive incalculable blessings." Strangely enough, Asvaghosha, a gifted Brahman, became a convert to Buddhism at the close of the first century after Christ and laid the foundation of a new Buddhism. Unlike the Buddha's teaching, it inculcated a belief in God who is known to it by the name of Amitabha. Deliverance from the vanities and sorrows of life is to be reached not simply by one's own *karma*, but also by God's

help. Those who seek such deliverance were called on to live in the world and to help it,—not to fly from the scene of life's struggles to the silence and solitude of a monastery. The new religion also asserted the power and possibility of obtaining everlasting life by communion with, and knowledge of God and the consequent partaking of his nature so as to avoid the imperative necessity of going through endless births and re-births. The old faith which denied or ignored the existence of an eternal soul or God was practically abandoned, as also the uncompromising asceticism which alone was to lead to the peace of Nirvana by going through the discipline enjoined on the fraternity of Buddhistic monks and nuns. Even the Southern School was influenced by the new teaching so far that it deified its founder and offered him the worship and homage which deists offer to God. To those who appreciate the significance of these facts it must be clear how Buddhism came gradually to die a natural death. The Mahayana doctrine was practically indistinguishable from the deistic religion of the Vedas. With the gradual revival of Hinduism, therefore, it became stricken with inanition,—for even to the masses of men a distinction without a difference can convey no appeal or meaning. To that revival the way was first led by the work of Sri Sankaracharya, critical and constructive, and after him by the equally great and noble work of Sri Ramanujacharya. Each represented a great and inmemorial Vedic tradition. Neither founded a new school of religious thought in India. They devoted their genius to the task of expounding the traditional doctrines of their schools in a systematic and comprehensive manner, and they have been the inspiring sources of virtue, holiness, and wisdom in India for untold ages. We are accustomed

to dwell on our differences a good deal. They are certainly of paramount importance. Each school must stand by the acceptance—or fall by the rejection—of whatever doctrines are peculiar to it, and we must also consider the influence they exercise on the lives and minds of men. But the points of agreement are many and valuable and should not be ignored or undervalued. The Saguna-vada which is for the Advaitin the means for the attainment and realisation of the Absolute Self is substantially the doctrine of Ramanuja known as qualified Monism. In fact, the Advaitic teacher Appayya Dikshita has declared in one of his works that the interpretation of the Sariraka - Mimamsa - Sastra as establishing and defining the personalities of Siva and Vishnu and the means of attaining to their realisation as the Supreme God is fully acceptable to him. Both the Pasupata and Pancharatra Schools have had an extensive share in the reconquest of India for the Vedic religion. Sri Ramanuja has always shone forth as the brightest star of the Pancharatra system and of the religion of *bhakti* which has had an abiding influence all over India throughout the ages that have passed away. Thus the Buddhistic religion had once overspread the whole land and was in a fair way to accomplish the overthrow of the Sanatana Dharma. India, however, after passing through centuries of trial and conflict, was enabled, under the lead and inspiration of great teachers and saints, to pass again into the peace and bliss of firm allegiance to the ancient banner of the Vedic religion.

The Mohammedan invasion and conquest brought to us some little unsettlement followed by reaction and renovation. In Maharashtra, in Bengal, and in the Punjab —the same parts of India as have become centres of

political and religious disturbance in recent times—the position seems to have become somewhat acute, and the Hindu mind responded by the development of what has been, happily or otherwise, termed Protestant Hinduism,—a movement inspired by various holy saints and insisting on the importance of the emotional aspect of *bhakti* in its various forms or stages towards the personality of Isvara and ignoring or undervaluing the contemplative aspect of it as well as the ritualistic aspect of the Vedic religion. Some have held that even the Upanishads and the Gita are the outcome of an earlier period and movement of Protestantism, but this is only the opinion of men with a superficial knowledge of them, or of men interested not only in raising the emotional aspect of *bhakti* in the estimation of men, but of underestimating the higher phases of religion in India as practised among the orthodox castes and sections Those who have always adhered to the Vedic religion in this country will never undervalue the importance of the emotion of *prema* (love) as a spiritual force making for the elevation of man. But to say that it is the only aspect of religion wanted for man in this or any age is to ignore the authority of the greater part of the Sruti and to stultify the importance, in the eyes of God and man, of the Holy Land and the Holy People. The emotional religion of *bhakti* has not only existed in India from the remotest times, but exists in one form or another in Mohammedan, Christian, and other lands. Emotion is undeniably good in itself. It has led to charity and social unity, and it has also helped to some extent to bring about that form of mental energy which spends itself in the realisation of high economic and political aims. But here positivists, sceptics, agnostics, and atheists come in with a record and claim of the same kind as that which

does so much credit to the religious emotionalists of all times and climes. We cannot also be quite certain if, in the emotional religion of Maharashtra and elsewhere, the *bhakti* idea is so pure or elevated as we would wish. It seems to bear on its face the mark of a compromise or struggle with the aggressive force of Islam, and so has the defect of its origin. My point in saying all this is only to explain that, though we attach due importance to the so-called Protestant religion of emotional *bhakti* or *prema* and to its developments in various forms in later periods of our history, we cannot assign to it the importance that belongs to the *Karma*, the *upasana*, and the *jnana* aspects of the Vedic religion. These are the aspects of our religion which differentiate it from every other religion in the world. To abandon these or minimise their importance is to dethrone Hinduism from its unique position among the faiths of the world and to deny to the people of Aryavarta the function which belongs to them of being the channels by which those who have developed the *Daiva Sampat* or the spiritual side of human nature are enabled to find the facilities needed for reaching the goal of life. At the same time, we cannot help feeling that these Protestant movements — whether initiated by the Bhaktas and Gurus of the past or by the leaders of Samajes in Modern India—are the means by which the Aryan religion protects itself from encroachment by alien faiths. They seem to serve as a temporary cave of Adullam or as a moral dyke or barrier erected to protect the Holy Faith and People for the time being from the rising flood of materialistic and unspiritual beliefs threatening to overwhelm them in desolation and ruin. In the course of time and the progress of circumstance, the unfading vitality and incorporating power of the Arya-Dharma

unfailingly assert themselves through divine grace, and the hope springs eternally in our breast that we, as the elect of God, are to remain the heirs of all the ages. The rebels of to-day, the heretics of to-morrow, the brethren in the faith of the day after,—such are the steps in the adaptation of the Arya-Dharma to the changing needs of the environment; and so we who remain the eternal guardians of the citadel of holiness and truth in the domain of the spirit have to pursue our way in calmness and strength of conviction, as we have hitherto done and as the Roman Catholic Church has done throughout her history,—yielding to the stress of circumstance where we have to yield, resisting where we can, but firm in our obedience to our Master's commanding voice and his confiding message to us as his chosen people.

There are some who hold that Sri Ramanuja's system is also an aspect of the Protestant movement to which we have just made reference. This opinion is chiefly founded on the idea that he raised the Sudras to religious privileges which are denied to them by Sankaracharya. This idea has no justification if we examine the respective positions taken by these Acharyas in the Apasudradhikarana of the Vedanta Sutras. Both agree that the Upanishads cannot be utilised for conveying spiritual instruction to the Sudras. The Itihasas, Puranas, &c., are the media specially intended and reserved for their benefit. This arrangement is not due to human injustice or depravity. The Sruti and the Smritis contain the divine law and command, and God ordains all for the benefit of all. Nor is there any special loss or injury to the Sudras involved thereby. For, so long as the meaning conveyed and the result gained is the same, it matters not a bit whether the

words of the Veda or others are used. Sankara declares his view as follows:—

"इतिहासपुराणाधिगमे
चातुर्वर्ण्यस्याधिकारस्मरणात् ॥"

"ఇతిహాసపురాణాధిగమే
చాతుర్వర్ణ్యస్యాధికారస్మరణాత్ ॥"

"The Smritis declare that all the four castes are qualified for acquiring knowledge by means of Itihasas and Puranas." Ramanuja's view, on the contrary, is:—

"शूद्रस्येतिहासपुराणानुज्ञानं
पापक्षयादिफलार्थं नोपासनार्थं ॥"

"శూద్రస్యేతిహాసపురాణానుజ్ఞానం
పాపక్షయాదిఫలార్థం నోపాసనార్థం ॥"

"The permission of knowledge to Sudras through Itihasa and Purana is meant to secure to them the destruction of sin, &c., not to enable them to practise devout meditation (on God)." These extracts clearly show that Ramanuja's views are more or less in accordance with those of Sankara, and that the aim of both was to adhere to the Vedic religion according to their lights. It is not justifiable to hold that Ramanuja is here simply declaring the views of the Sutrakara, and not his own. For all must acknowledge that the Sariraka-Sutras are meant to declare only the doctrine of the Sruti which is universally esteemed the highest authority for all Hindus. In forming these views, I am entirely guided by the writings of the Acharyas, and not by the so-called biographies of them which are current,—though every one must admit that the biographies of Ramanuja and the Vaishnava teachers who came after him seem more

reliable than the Sankara-Vijayas. We have at present no means of obtaining thoroughly critical and authentic accounts of the lives of these Acharyas apart from what devotion and tradition have handed down to us, and it seems to me that we should prefer to be guided by the light of the knowledge we can gather from their authentic writings. So guided, we have not a shadow of justification for the opinion now current that Ramanuja led a protestant movement or crusade against the Vedic religion or gave that religion a more *universal* form than any other aspect of Hinduism—in the absurd meaning often given to the phrase, *universal religion*, viz., that which seeks to embrace within its fold by proselytism as large a number as possible of the members of the human race who inhabit the earth at any particular epoch of its history. At the same time we must not lose sight of the fact that it is not what a man really is or does that influences the course of events in the life of his own people or of humanity at large, but what is regarded as such in the world under the influence of a living and growing tradition. Especially in India, where we have never cared to cultivate a truly critical spirit and a genuine historical conscience, tradition—and often tradition wildly and even grotesquely cumulative in its course through the ages—has usurped the place of truth. The life and career of Sri Ramanujacharya have, like those of all our other great Acharyas, become transformed under the influence of human imagination, or even of purely material human self-interest, and this transformation has at least in the present case been on the whole—at least in some respects—beneficial to Hindu Society. It has clearly led to greater consolidation and greater mutual trust and influence among the various subdivisions of caste among Sri Vaishnavas. It has also led to the

greater intellectual and moral elevation of non-Brahman Srivaishnava castes, though they have not in my view attained to such high levels of moral and spiritual elevation as have been reached by the corresponding classes of the Hindu Community which profess the Saiva religion in South India. We see in Christian lands also the influence of the great spiritual transformation which Christianity passed through under the disturbing influence exercised by ecclesiastical tradition or by commanding personalities like St. Paul, St. Augustine, Martin Luther and others. In the case of Hinduism, however, no such change of doctrine or perversion of truth has occurred as to involve a distortion of the course to be followed by the human spirit here, or of its destiny beyond. We have only to deplore the comparatively milder process of distortion in the record of events in the lives of certain important personalities; and though this has been productive of a good deal of superstition, credulity and priestcraft, the actual writings of our great Acharyas and the maintenance of the spirit of their teachings as handed down through successive generations of scholars and adherents have enabled us to retain, even to these days and in spite of the numerous revolutions of Indian political history, some measure of that enthusiasm for the spirit and its realisation which has been the proud privilege of our Arya community in Bharatavarsha from the remotest antiquity.

Once more we have in our own times attractive principles or attractive personalities presented to us, and difficulties of various kinds—present and prospective—thereby created for us. These difficulties are neither of our own making, nor of our rulers' making, but are due to influences which have entered this land from outside. First there is the materialistic creed of modern science

and life. Scientific discoveries, mechanical inventions, industrial appliances and inventions of all kinds: the laws of the conservation and correlation of energy: the principle of the evolution of matter and life conceived as a world-law: the growth of the historical and critical spirit and the search after origins uncompromisingly applied to every branch of knowledge: the progress of the revolutionary gospel of democratic equality in its moderate form of universal manhood suffrage and equality of opportunity for all or in its extreme forms of socialism with its advocacy of common property and work for all and of anarchism with its denial of the right of Governments to exist,—all these have come upon the Western mind in a flood. The new light has travelled from West to East and revealed to us that civilisation is the aim of life and consists in the harmonising or adaptation of the organism to the environment and demands its growing complexity and compositeness. The old Indian ideal of simplicity and serenity is false. Man is fated to live by the application of reason to the problems of life and mind, by strenuous and unceasing exertion, by the creating and filling up of new wants,—not by resignation to the authority of a supreme will. The Indian ideals of Viveka and Vairagya have lost their application to human life, and the Indian civilisation is effete,—for it is based on theocratic or aristocratic conceptions, the world has outgrown them and adopted an agnostic creed and a democratic ideal instead. We, too, must therefore replace faith by science, the joint family by social unity, caste by class, custom by competition, birth by choice, selection by election, restraint by freedom, individualism by collectivism, and so on and on. *Secondly*, we have also preached to us—but more often in these days of criticism, higher and lower, with the voice of supplication

than with the voice of a compelling authority—the attractive picture of the life and personality of Jesus, a picture blurred indeed and torn by rationalistic and historical inquiry, chiefly in France and Germany, but still a picture of resignation, of suffering, of love and service to man which, when presented to minds ignorant of the present battered and tattered condition of its great original and prototype and enforced, too, by the addition of valuable worldly advantages and attractions, is often found in practice to possess an irresistible charm for certain men of all races and climes and conditions of life. As a consequence, then, of the coming in of new men and new ideas and of the wide disturbances, too, which have taken place in the industrial and social condition of the land, a ferment has arisen in the minds of men,—many feel the need of some alteration in the basis of thought and life, some take a hasty plunge into the unknown from pure self-love or the love of novelty and excitement; some, too, are moved to action by the Voltairean principle of Crushing the Infamous.

Every man with any pretensions to discernment must admit that the present economic and industrial situation in India is to the last degree unsatisfactory. Once we took the lead in the manufactures and commerce of the world,—and that not very long ago; now we are fallen into a position of abject decadence and impotence. We only produce in order to supply raw material for foreign manufacturers. Our native agriculture, too, is not only unprogressive, but steadily tending to decline. In many cases, also, land is tending to pass from Indian ownership, and this is a tendency that should be checked by every legal and fair means in our power. In order to check these and other economic evils, we must leave no stone unturned to acquire a thorough knowledge of modern

science and its mechanical applications and devices. The question of the material condition of India is a large one and cannot be taken up here. But the facts above stated are unquestionable; and blind, indeed, must be the man who can fail to see the great industrial crisis that is developing here and to appreciate the causes that have transformed India from the El Dorado it once was into one of the world's sinks of poverty and destitution.

And yet it is worth while to reflect in this connection upon the opinion expressed by a brilliant Englishman—Houston Stewart Chamberlain—whose nature and culture have been entirely continental and whose great German work, "The Foundations of the Nineteenth Century" has just appeared in an English translation,—that "Sincere harmony between Science and the Church we can never have in the way it prevailed in India." The same harmony has existed all along, and hence we can see how the power of thought inherent in the Indian mind can break the force of the temporary discords of to-day and bring us again to the haven of peace.

"बाह्यस्पर्शेऽवसक्तात्मा विन्दत्यात्मनियत्सुखम् ।
स ब्रह्मयोगयुक्तात्मा सुखमक्षयमश्नुते ।
योऽन्तस्सुखोन्तरारामस्तथान्तर्ज्योतिरेवसः ।
स योगी ब्रह्म निर्वाणं ब्रह्मभूतोऽधिगच्छति ॥"

"బాహ్యస్పర్శేష్వసక్తాత్మా విందత్యాత్మనియత్సుఖమ్ ।
సబ్రహ్మయోగయుక్తాత్మా సుఖమక్షయమశ్నుతే ॥
యోఽన్తస్సుఖోన్తరారామస్తథాన్తర్జ్యోతిరేవసః ।
సయోగీ బ్రహ్మ నిర్వాణం బ్రహ్మభూతోఽధిగచ్ఛతి ॥"

The strength is still alive which marks the spirit of the sage whose spontaneous outpourings from a truly

enlightened heart have even now such a strange fascination for us.

" सवितर्यपि शीतरुचौ चन्द्रे तीक्ष्णेऽप्यधोवहत्यग्नौ ।
मायिकमिदमिति जानन् जीवन्मुक्तो न विस्मयीभवति ॥ "

" సవితర్యపి శీతరుచౌ చన్ద్రే తీక్ష్ణేప్యధోవహత్యగ్నౌ ।
మాయికమిదమితి జానన్ జీవన్ముక్తో న విస్మయీభవతి ॥ "

"If the sun should emit a freezing light and the moon a burning one, if fires send downward their blazing sparks, the liberated sage here will feel no emotion of surprise, for he knows that they are but (the more unusual) manifestations of nature." At the same time we are not to suppose that the Indian mind is incapable of working on nature so as to produce marvellous and striking effects and to accomplish great wordly aims for the society and the state. The gifted Englishman above quoted delivers himself as follows about our ancestors:—"The pretty clearly defined complex of peoples that make up the Aryan Indians forms an absolutely unique phenomenon among mankind; they possessed gifts such as no other race has ever possessed and which led to immortal, incomparable achievements." Even of us, their degenerate descendants of to-day he says:—"That born metaphysician upon whom we Europeans fix our eyes in admiration never daring to hope that we could ever overtake him." The marvellous achievements of European science have in these recent years come upon us in such bewildering and astounding succession that the mind of the modern Indian trained in Western knowledge refuses to believe that there can be any truth in the accounts transmitted to us of "the immortal, incomparable achievements" of the epic age of our national story. But so learned and accomplished a

man as Mr. Chamberlain finds no difficulty in believing in the possession by the Indian mind of gifts and methods —now unfortunately fallen into discredit or desuetude— which were once undoubtedly efficacious for acting fruitfully on the material world. The same gifts still remain with us, but dormant and waiting to be called forth into activity for achievements similar to those which our ancient forbears were capable of accomplishing in the glorious epic age and even subsequently. The time may come—and quite unexpectedly—when man's reason or faith may find the value and utility of sources of knowledge now despised and relegated to undeserved neglect. There is hardly any use—or even time for—entering into details. It is enough for our present purpose to state in general terms that our Rasayana, Yoga, and Mantra Sastras and our Vedic ritualism contain the methods for acting on the outer world animate and inanimate, without the use of complicated machinery, At its best, machinery is but an awkard and ugly imitation of nature's gifts to some of her children in the lower rungs of the ladder of creation. For example, the air-ship now so much noised about is, at its best, but a poor inartistic imitation of the charming spontaneity which marks the bird when it cleaves the air on its wings. Man is an artist only when he acts within his internal realm with the freedom and ease which characterise the spontaneous operations of nature, and such inner activity manifests itself in the production of intended effects on the outer world. The civilisation whose chronicle is found in the epics of India was fruitful of achievements having their source in the culture of man's inward energies and capacities. Only thus does man essentially and honourably differ from the animals around him. Moreover, the Atman is the real man; and all that we achieve in the

outer world, all that binds us to that outer world, is an obstacle in the path to that self-realisation which can alone lead to spiritual freedom. The Indian sages have also realised in practice that that which thus leads man to freedom from the bondage of the flesh proves also his sanctuary from the material ills of all kinds which threaten him during his pilgrimage on earth. The Indian conception of civilisation is thus one which truly values the inner moral and spiritual culture and is sure to lead to such a truly artistic shaping of the external life of the individual and society as will place man above the animal impulses, cravings and conflicts of his lower nature. Hence we maintain that our civilisation and society alone furnish the suitable environment for those whose Karma is such as to provide them with the facilities needed for achieving the goal of emancipation from the bondage of material and animal existence.

The question may here be put whether Hinduism and the Aryan people can justly be allowed the unique merit or function which we claim for them. A Christian Missionary—no less a man than the Revd. Dr. Miller, of the Madras College—studying the history of religious development in India once proclaimed his conviction that India alone had taught to the world the doctrines of the "Omnipenetrativeness of God and the solidarity of man." The former refers to our idea that Isvara is the Antaryamin or the supreme immanent soul residing in the universe and guiding the evolution and destiny of the soul. The latter refers to our system of Varnasrama which provides the suitable environment for the soul which has attained to fitness for progress in true spiritual evolution. No Hindu who knows anything of the laws of social evolution need be ashamed of the ancient system of Varnasrama of which only

a feeble and distorted remnant still survives. Security, self-sufficiency within the state, and material prosperity have successively been the guiding principles in the evolution of societies. These principles have successively brought into existence the militant, the legal, and the economic stages of social development. India alone has striven to rise beyond the purely military ideal of the ancient empires of Egypt and Babylon, the legal and administrative constructions of the Greeks and Romans, and the ideal of economic freedom and advance which gives to the fervid Teutonic and Slavonic mind its intense absorption in the pursuit of gold and land. In India alone our sages combined these principles and gradations of social evolution into a harmonious whole and at the same time subordinated them to the pursuit and realisation of the ultimate destiny of the soul. There are many to whom in these days the Indian caste-system is an eyesore. The very mention of it is like brandishing a red rag before the bull. The truth is that we have but a shattered and deformed remnant of the system, not the system in its ancient prefection, purity and power. Buddhism sought to overthrow it, but only succeeded in undermining its strength and integrity. The key to the subsequent history of India is, as Swami Vivekananda pointed out, to be found in the fact that it has consisted of a uniform endeavour on the part of Hindus to regain lost ground. We have only very partially succeeded, but it is a consolation to think that the attempt is still going on and will not cease till we shall have restored to us the glories of ancient India. The true Brahmin, the true Kshatriya and other castes are in course of formation, and henceforth the process of renewal and recovery promises to be more rapid than hitherto. The time is coming when in Indian Society

structure and function will have to be in perfect correspondence, when the demand for conformity between men's professions and performances will become so insistent and imperious as to be irresistible. The present is an age of transition and so is full of struggle and disturbance. It will soon pass, and then the Indian civilisation will have regained its ancient harmony within and strength without. Meanwhile, we have to remain true to the aspirations of the sages and to the inspiring precepts and promises given to us by the Lord Himself in the Gita, IX. 32 and 33.

"मां हि पार्थ व्यपाश्रित्य
येऽपिस्युः पापयोनयः ।
स्त्रियोवैश्यास्तथाशूद्रा
स्तेपि यान्ति परां गतिम् ॥
किंपुनः ब्राह्मणाः पुण्याः
भक्ताराजर्षयस्तथा ॥ "

"మాంహిపార్థవ్యపాశ్రిత్య
యేఽపిస్యుః పాపయోనయః ।
స్త్రియోవైశ్యాస్తథాశూద్రా
స్తేఽపియాంతి పరాంగతిమ్ ॥
కింపునః బ్రాహ్మణాః పుణ్యాః
భక్తారాజర్షయస్తథా ॥ "

"O Partha! even those who are of sinful birth—women, Vaisyas and Sudras,—even they, seeking Me as their helper, reach the Supreme Goal. How much more certain it is that Brahmans of holy birth and royal saints who are my devotees (attain the same)." This passage clearly shows who, according to Sri Krishna, reach the

supreme goal of existence and under what conditions. Ours is the only religion which gives prominence to the doctrines of Karma and re-birth and recognises the need of spiritual perfection by a process of evolution. All souls which have ever been in incarnation anywhere have an assured place and an assured hope in our Hindu religion. Hence it is the only universal and absolute religion for man. Our great boast is that we take in no proselytes, and we disdain to offer any attractions, worldly or other, for those who are willing and ready to go in search of them. We owe this proud and unique position to our conviction that all souls will some time in the course of their evolution find their place in our system of Varnasrama, and to our conscious or unconscious belief that we are the most spiritually advanced among the communities of men, and that irrespective of our secular status in the world. The spiritual superiority of Hinduism is acknowledged by the rest of the world,—not only by thinkers and scholars like Victor Cousin, Schopenhauer, Max Muller and Deussen, but by active public men and journalists like Mr. W. T. Stead, who are in daily and hourly contact with the social life and popular needs of Western peoples and civilisations. The great Indian ideas of the omni-penetrativeness of God and the solidarity of man and our doctrines of Karma and re-birth are wanted for the rest of the world. Till they can acquire them they can never gain the spiritual peace born of Vairagya which can alone bring joy and satisfaction to the perturbed heart of man or release him from bondage to those emotions and activities which bring ruin successively to community after community in the tireless pursuit of material preponderance in the world or the equally tireless pursuit of the problems of mind and life by pure

speculation and ratiocination unaided by divine authority and revelation. This will become clear if we examine the history of ideas in Europe at certain momentous epochs of past history or condition of thought in Europe to-day.

Europe has had its own share of recurrent social and mental unrest. The sophists or wise men, having got a scientific training in Athenian Schools, made their way into the arena of life and began to teach the people. They directed a termendous battery of criticism against earlier systems of belief and founded a new doctrine on individualistic or utilitarian principles. Gradually the conception of the validity of divine and human laws gave way. Men reached the anarchical conclusion that those who are truly wise and strong follow their own natural dispositions and impulses—a conclusion not unlike the modern Nietzschian philosophy of Naturalistic Immoralism. The new inspiration which came from Socrates and the philosophical systems to which it gave birth could do little for the revival of the old religious faith or of the basis of popular morality in any form. The Macedonian supremacy, the Roman Conquest and the introduction of Christianity came in one after another; and the classical age of Greek antiquity finally came to a close. The Greek race and intellect had done its work and passed away slowly from the world's stage.—Let us take a leap of a thousand years. Christian inspiration and Roman organisation had built up a great religious society and civilisation—a civilsation based on ideals and conceptions which recent activities of Catholic ecclesiastics in England and America have shown not to have lost any part of their former vitality. But for centuries they have had to contend against many purely intellectual and sceptical movements. Italian humanism, French rationalism,

German Enlightenment, and modern materialism and scientific meliorism are simply varying phases of an intellectual movement which has steadily tended to sap the foundations of faith and produced radical changes and sometimes violent convulsions in society and state. If Europe has been saved from anarchy or catastrophe, it has owed it to the fact that much of the energy of men has been diverted to the work—prompted by the love of gold or the love of possessions and power or of all combined —of territorial expansion over the rest of the globe. Nor has the situation changed during recent years or at the present moment. The same unsettlement of thought is at work; the same undermining of accepted standards of morality and the social unrest consequent on it continue. The work of expansion and conquest followed by activity in the development of new territorial acquisitions continues to occupy the minds and energies of men. The danger of social disaster, however, remains; and we often hear of the increasing popularity of socialistic ideas, of the occasional outburst of anarchic forces in the form of strikes on a large scale, of protracted conflicts or even battles between large masses of working men and the police, of the sudden and violent overthrow of dynasties and of political systems.

It is worth while considering what are the intellectual sources of the present unsettlement, ferment, and instability in society and the state. We may take Mill and Spencer as representative of the ideas which have had the largest vogue among thinking minds during the greater part of the last 100 years. Mill resolved the contents of mind into sensations and feelings and the permanent possibilities of them. Impressions coming from outside and following their own laws form the entire framework of the mind. Memory is the mere

reproduction in images and ideas of these externally-derived impressions, sensations and feelings. The human will consists of the associations—the attractions and repulsions — established by our feelings and forming motives to action or abstinence from it. Men's thoughts and activities are the result of the interaction by association between the contents of the mind impressed on it from without. Turning to Spencer, we can sum up his view by quoting a sentence from one of his works :—"The deepest truths we can reach are simply statements of the widest uniformities in our experience of the relations of matter, motion, and force, and that matter, motion and force are but symbols of the unknown reality." Spencer only gave a scientific turn to the sensational and associational psychology of the two Mills and of Lewes, and added to it a constructive side based on the principle of evolution. The complex phenomena of the external and internal world are explained by the laws of the persistence of force and the consequent continuous redistribution of matter and motion. Spencer proclaims the absoluteness of existence outside the phenomenal world. But it is certain that he did not conceive of his Unknowable or Absolute as anything other than the substance of matter and mind. Certainly it was nothing spiritual—nothing having the least kinship with our conception of Atman. Kant's Thing-in-Itself (*Ding-an-sich*) does not differ very materially from Spencer's unknowable—for he holds that our knowledge can predicate absolutely nothing of it, but that yet we can think of it, though it has no positive content of any kind. How real existence and mere negation can be combined it is hard to conceive. Kant's Categories or Forms of the Understanding do not seem to be very different from the *apriori* intuitions of the mind postulated by his predecessors of the common-sense school.

If we turn from the speculative to the practical side of modern thought we find the same uncertainty and conflict in the views of leaders of philosophical schools. However much writers belonging to the experiential or evolutional school have differed from intuitionists in regard to the origin and standard of morality,—however much they may have wished to emphasise the importance of experience in relation to the one, and of consequences in relation to the other,—they have agreed in urging the need of practising the virtues which have always been recognised as binding on man in the society and the state. The apostle of selection by the processes of "Nature red in tooth and claw"—Charles Darwin—admits that sympathy, self-sacrifice, fidelity, patriotism, &c., are qualities which though they might not help individuals, are of service to communities in the struggle for existence. Huxley, also, admits the need of "combating the cosmic process" of self-assertion by the "ethical process" of self-restraint in order that we may secure "the fitting of as many as possible to survive." Spencer's optimistic imagination enables him to look forward, in the name of scientific evolution, to a time when we shall reach a thorough-going reconciliation of egoism and altruism. But he, too, does not meanwhile deny the existence, or the need, or the merit of the altruistic virtues which men have long been accustomed to value. At last, however, there has arisen one to whom we have had to make an earlier reference—the German Nietzsche, the apostle and advocate of what Huxley called "the gladiatorial theory of existence." Nietzsche holds that the time has come for making a new valuation of good and bad conduct on the basis of a "Naturalistic Immoralism." He hates morality on the ground that it thwarts the instincts of nature. He condemns what he calls "the slave-morality of sympathy" and holds that

"the only Christian died on the Cross." He hates Christianity as its morality is that of the slave, and conceives his mission to be to deliver the Western mind from the infection of Christianity. The will to rule or the desire for power is the most important for the future development of mankind. We have reached the time when wickedness is again to prevail as it did in the good old heroic times when the strong man did what he liked. Goodness and badness are one to him, and nothing is to be forbidden. The supreme task of mankind is to produce the strong man—the "Ubermensch," the Overman. The present German Emperor is well known as the preacher of the Gospel of the "Mailed Fist," and both Machiavelli and Napoleon who admired Machiavelli and his maxims are great favourites in Modern Europe.

These brief allusions to the speculative and practical sides of modern thought in the West show us how great is the need for reiterating here and elsewhere the great ideas common to all our Indian teachers at the present stage of our evolution. Sri Ramanuja is among the most eminent of all the Indian Acharyas who have condemned this perpetual life of worldliness—of struggle and striving—as the goal of human life. All Hindu teachers have insisted on the importance of realising the principle of fixity in nature and man. Not only the Atman is permanent and eternal, but in nature itself there is not only variation, but also fixity of species. We have also in human life not only principal but subsidiary groups—and all are fixed. These groups and species have come into existence under the influence of the laws of Karma and the operation of the principle of divine selection. They are to be helps, not hindrances to each other. Souls are to be helped to be born into the spheres of life and the social groups which are fit for their

present and future evolution. Man's duty is to obey divine laws and help forward the process of divine selection. If man disobeys and incurs Heaven's wrath, God has to punish him and even to destroy the world. The laws of Karma operate, and he is only the giver of Karma's fruits. Again, the laws of Karma are inexorable and God creates the world anew. The time comes when destiny and divine grace unite to give the world another start, so that men may again have the chance of obeying the divine ordinances and rendering themselves deserving of the goal which, in His grace and mercy, God has marked out for them. Neither wreckage is to be the goal of life, nor the greatest gain to some at the expense of others. The goal is to be reached by the process of co-ordination through self-denial and love as the higher law of Nature and through such activities only as are suitable to the grade of evolution which we have reached and will lead to the avoidance of conflict and competition. Intelligent initiative is not to be denied to man, but its province must be limited by the high purposes and aims for which the Dharma has been prescribed for us. This alone can lead to harmony and co-operation and accelerate the reign of love and the evolution of man so as to accomplish his high destiny. We must not also forget that our environment is much larger than the material universe we know, and that the different gradations of intelligent beings have mutual attraction and repulsion so as to influence each other's destinies and evolution. It is these ideas that lie at the basis of the religion of the Hindus, and they are shared by all forms and divisions of Hinduism. They are common alike to Ramanuja and Sankara, and some of them at least are peculiar and special to India. This may sound to some at least a startling claim to make on

behalf of India. But familiarity, as we know, often blunts, or even blinds, human perception. In India, especially, many of us are even wilfully blind to our own treasures, and even the common places of daily life have often to be revealed to us by Western voice in order that we may open our eyes and perceive them, and we do not often see ourselves truly even after knowing ourselves as we appear to others. We have already seen how a Western voice once spoke on our behalf and on behalf of truth; and, wonder of wonders!, it was the voice of a Christian Missionary which proclaimed that India alone has taught to the world the doctrines of "the omnipenetrativeness of God and the solidarity of man." It is because we have stuck firmly to the Vedic revelation of these doctrines that we still remain the impregnable rock of spirituality against which the waves of Materialism and Atheism, of Socialism and Anarchism, of credulity and wonder-working which have flooded the world from time to time have dashed themselves in vain. The nectar of immortality is still ours to give, and, as Swami Vivekananda said truly, "This National ship has been ferrying and carrying millions and millions of souls across the waters of life. For scores of shining centuries it has been plying across this water, and scores of millions of souls have been taken to the other shore, to blessedness, through its agency."

We shall now take leave of these general considerations and refer to certain questions which have been raised as to the relation of the Ramanuja to other schools of religious thought and especially to Sankara's Vedanta doctrine. And, first, can we justly hold, as Dr. Thibaut does, that, while Ramanuja interprets the Sutras of Vyasa in accordance with the views of many predecessors representing a venerable and weighty tradition, Sankara is

disinclined to quote previous teachers of his own school? Dr. Thibaut says:—"Sankara does not on the whole impress one as an author particularly anxious to strengthen his own case by appeals to ancient authorities." On the other hand, he says of Sri Ramanuja:—"In addition to Bodhayana, Ramanuja appeals to quite a series of ancient teachers—Purvacharyas—who carried on the true tradition as to the teaching of the Vedanta and the meaning of the Sutras." The truth is that Sri Sankaracharya refers in explicit terms to the Purvacharyas of his own school. At the commencement of his Bhashya on the Taittiriya-Upanishad, he says:—

"यैरिमे गुरुभिः पूर्वं पदवाक्यप्रमाणतः ।
व्याख्यातास्सर्ववेदान्ता स्तान्नित्यं प्रणतोस्म्यहम् ॥"

"యైరిమే గురుభిః పూర్వం పదవాక్యప్రమాణతః ।
వ్యాఖ్యాతాస్సర్వవేదాన్తా స్తాన్నిత్యం ప్రణతోఽస్మ్యహం ॥"

"I offer my constant obeisance to those Gurus who before me, have commented on all Vedantas (Upanishads) by explaining the words, the sentences, and the proofs." Again he not only frequently quotes from his Parama-Guru, Gaudapadacharya, but has written a lengthy commentary on his Karikas,—and he also refers to him several times in his Bhashya on the Brahma-Sutras as *Sampradayavid*,—the knower of tradition. Both Sankara and Ramanuja, therefore, represent schools of Vedic doctrine having a venerable antiquity, and neither came forward only with a make-shift framework of compromise intended simply to meet a historic crisis and need forced on us from without or from within. In India the Veda has been accepted as the sole basis for all doctrine regarding both the goal of existence and the means for its attainment. Any doctrine acceptable to any section of the Hindus has come in only as directly or indirectly

taught by the Vedas. The Agamas whether belonging to the Vaishnava or Saiva religion, all claim to be, and are accepted as, the divine exponents of the essential purport of the Vedas. Even the Protestants of the later seemingly un-Vedic Bhakti Schools in Maharashtra or elsewhere have not placed themselves in opposition to the Veda or Vedanta and have freely drawn from the Itihasas and Puranas for inculcating lessons in Dharma and for information regarding the lives and works of the deities they have worshipped. Some have even commented on the Sutras of Vyasa. We claim, therefore, that Ramanuja cannot be said to take his place—much less anything like a pre-eminent place—among the founders of the Protestant Schools which have either partially or wholly abandoned the revelation of the Vedas in order to place themselves in consonance with altered conditions of life or even regarded it as wholly unsuited to the needs of human life on earth. Ramanuja, like Sankara, is purly Vedic and orthodox—though they represent two different schools and traditions. The Mahabharata refers to the Vedas, the Sankhya, the Yoga, the Pasupata and the Pancharatra in one and the same sloka as containing the traditional teaching in regard to religion and so the Vaishnava religion of Ramanuja which is based on the Vedas and the Pancharatragama cannot be classed along with the modern schools of Indian Protestantism.

There is also another reason why we cannot consent to class Ramanuja among the expounders of non-Vedic Protestantism in India. The supremacy of the Vedic religion among the world's faiths is due to the fact that in it alone are formulated and systematised the practical modes of life and the processes of meditation needed for attaining to the realisation of the supreme goal of

liberation from the bondage of matter,—processes which are common to all sections of our holy faith and which are unknown to the creeds professed by the rest of the world. It is only the Vedas and the Agamas that have set a supreme value on these practical steps for the realisation of the Supreme Being. So long as the Vaishnavism of Ramanuja shares with other aspects of Hinduism these peculiar doctrines and aids to the realisation of the self, it cannot be classed among the Indian Protestant sects, but takes rank as an orthodox system. Perhaps it is the most orthodox of all in some respects, and his spiritual influence is potent among his followers today to an extent and in a manner which cannot be found among the professed followers of any other teacher.

In this place, we feel tempted, to protest against Dr. Thibaut's idea that, while Sankara's doctrine is nearer to the Upanishads, Ramanuja's is more akin to the Sutras of Vyasa. The Sariraka-Mimamsa is intended as a text-book of Vedanta for the instruction and illumination of the human mind, and for the preparation of Pandits for the work of defending and propagating the eternal truths of the Brahma-Vada. So there can be no conflict between the doctrines of the Upanishads and of the Sutras of Vyasa Bhagavan. Badarayana is aptly called Sarvajna-Sikhamani by the great Bhashyakara Srikantacharya, and is adored throughout India by the follwers of every School of Vaidika orthodoxy as the purest, the holiest, the wisest, the most gifted and the most thoroughly benevolent and divinest of the saints and prophets who have shed the lustre of their name on the holy land. Nothing can be more absurd than to suggest that there is a conflict of any kind between his system and that expounded by the eternal Vedas. No Indian School of Vedanta recognises or can

afford to recognise the existence of such a conflict. To do so would be at once to write its own doom, and no thinking man of our race would give ear to such a suggestion. For the Vedas are to us the source of all knowledge which is to lead us from darkness to light, from the bondage of ignorance to the bliss of eternal freedom; and Vyasa's Mission in the world, as one of the Vibhutis of the Lord Himself, is to set forth the Vedic doctrine on the irrefragable basis of his supreme dialectics. Ramanuja and Sankara, equally with the leaders of all other Vaidika Schools, interpret Vyasa as the most authoritative of all Indian authorities on Vedic doctrine, and not as one who has brought to us a message of his own which is more or less in conflict with the Vedas.

There is an idea abroad that, while Sankara had a mightier intellect than Ramanuja, Ramanuja had a broader heart and a more cosmopolitan sympathy than Sankara. This view seems to be chiefly based on the unfounded belief that Ramanuja's doctrine and ministry resulted in securing larger religious privileges for Sudras. We have already seen how erroneous this view is when comparing the views propounded by the two Acharyas in the Apasudradhikarana. Moreover, the comparison of their leading works brings out nothing to justify us in fixing the stamp of inferiority either on the intellect of Ramanuja or the heart of Sankara. In solid thought, extent of erudition, mastery of dialectics, power of inspiration, and the witchery of artistic literary expression, no one can point to any very perceptible difference between the two great teachers. Both owe it to their mighty intellectual power and to the marvellous stores of their mind that they have exercised an abiding influence on Indian thought and religion,—an influence, too, which

promises at no distant date to overthrow all geographical barriers and spread over the entire civilised world. In these days there is a tendency in certain quarters to indulge in contumelious ridicule of our Pandits, their training, their learning, and their methods. Only the other day there was a melancholy exhibition of inexcusable ignorance or insolence on a Madras platform where one speaker went the length of calling our Pandits "ethnological specimens." In my view, there are no worse ethnological specimens than our modern Indian educated men who, after half a century of honest and sustained effort on the part of our enlightened and benevolent rulers, have not been able yet to give to the world a single contribution to the literature of power or beauty which it will not willingly let die. Indeed, we—the products of Indian University training, at least in this Presidency, have not a single creative thought or work—absolutely nothing—to boast of, and it seems to me that we should be the last to cast a stone at our Pandits or the system which produced and is producing them. From this system have sprung the masterpieces of Indian literature and the immortal creations of Indian thought. It is this system that has produced the great Indian epics which are still the despair and the delight of civilised men all over the world. It is this system which has given us the Sakuntala which is accepted everywhere as one of the noblest creations of the human intellect. It has given us those great systems of Indian philosophy which have anticipated almost all that is valuable in the systems of thought, ancient and modern, which have had any influence for good in the development of all that is best in human civilisation. It has, finally, given us the great Acharyas who have exercised so much influence on the destinies of the Indian people and who have now

begun to attract the attention of the modern world and are soon to enter forcibly into the strongholds of the great civilisations of to-day and to take them by storm so as to bring into existence a nobler ideal and type of humanity than has yet been dreamt of in Western lands. Against triumphs like these what have we to bring forward except that, like performing animals in a Circus, we spout forth what we are taught of the ideas and words which have come to us from the West without even being able to discriminate which of these can be worked usefully into the marrow of our modern social being. The Pandit class has produced even within recent times master-pieces of thought and learning, some of which have not yet been made accessible to the public at large. Men like Anandalwar, Balakrishna Yati and others have lived only in very recent times, and great will be the loss to India when we shall cease to produce men like them—men gifted with some of the highest powers and graces of the Indian mind and able to influence for good the thoughts and activities of even the most cultured of the modern Indians. My point is this,—that this same system of Pandit learning gave us the great Ramanujacharya whose exalted personality and mighty influence for good on the life and destinies, past and present, of our country and of humanity at large we are celebrating today. It was that system which inspired and developed the mighty intellect of Sankara and the no less mighty intellect of Ramanuja. As both were mighty intellectual giants, both equally brought to their ministry among men all the graces of the human heart, all those mighty ethical impulses and emotions which attract the love of great masses of men and gain the permanent adhesion of thinking minds so as to form a new school of thought or a new epoch of

social activity. That Ramanuja brought to his great mission a love for his fellow-men, a sympathy for the low and fallen almost, if not altogether, unexampled in the history of our race is a circumstance which stirs the hearts of all of us to the utmost height of enthusiasm and reverence towards his holy name. It would be a mistake, however, to suppose that, because Sankara lived at a time when the work had to be done of overthrowing several powerful rival schools of thought and life totally or partially opposed to the true religion of the Vedas, he was only a dialectician bent on using his giant intellect and transcendent skill in polemics to crush his opponents and establish the supremacy of his own faith. We must not forget the persistent tradition—not only among his followers, but universally prevalent—that he carried out a radical reformation of morals among various Hindu sects, that he put an end to the filthy Tantric abominations of Vamachara and Kaula-Marga, and that everywhere he preached purity of heart and life. We have also referred to the fact that, according to him, Sudras equally with other castes were competent to obtain the *jnana* which Itihasas and Puranas contain. Dr. Deussen, his German expounder, calls his doctrine "the strongest support of pure morality," and that it alone enlightens us regarding the metaphysical basis of the Christian precept, "Love thy neighbour as thyself." We must not also forget the fact that Sankara has based his doctrine on the teachings of Him who has taught us (Gita, VI, 32)

"आत्मौपम्येन सर्वत्र समं पश्यति योऽर्जुन ।
सुखं वा यदि वा दुःखं स योगी परमो मतः ॥ "

" ఆత్మౌపమ్యేన సర్వత్ర సమం పశ్యతి యోర్జున ।
సుఖం వా యది వా దుఃఖం స యోగీ పరమో మతః ॥ "

"Of all My devotees, he is the highest who, fixed in the realisation of the Atman everywhere, perceives that pleasure is as welcome, and pain is as unwelcome, to others as they are to himself and so does good to all and evil to none."

Another point in which Sankara and Ramanuja are frequently, but erroneously, contrasted is that Sankara teaches a kind of veiled Buddhistic idealism, while Ramanuja is the out-spoken advocate of an uncompromising realism which is intelligible to all. Nothing can be more mistaken than this. All schools of Vedantists are realists. Sankara is never tired of repeating,

"ज्ञानं वस्त्वधीनम् ।"

"జ్ఞానం వస్త్వధీనమ్ ।"

"Knowledge is relative to the objects known." All objects exist outside in their own right and apart from the mind of man. Man only cognises them. As objects differ, cognitions differ,—not *vice versa*. All Advaitins are realists. Only the Buddhists of one school preach idealism, denying the external reality of an outside world apart from the mind and thinking of man. No doubt the Advaitin says that the reality of the world is of a different kind from that of the Atman or absolute existence,—for to him who has realised the Atman no world can exist. But it does not for this reason cease to exist for others. Even for him who has attained Brahmajnana external objects cease to exist when in the state of *Svanubhava*, self-realisation. Only the Mukta never returns to the world of experience material or mental. The ordinary *jnani* has his moods of more or less transitory God-Consciousness, and then returns to his ordinary

state of perceptive cognition of phenomena external or internal. This state is what Sankara calls

" बाधितानुवृत्तिः । "

" బాధితానువృత్తిః ॥ "

"the recurring experience of what has been stultified." We all know that no trees can grow upside down in water and that what are seen as such are merely illusory reflections of the trees growing on the bank. Still, the perception of the inverted reflections in the water is repeated all the same. The phenomenal reality of the world—which recurs even for the *jnani* when he returns from his state of *Samadhi-Nishta*, or *Samyag-darsana*, as it is techincally known—is not simply hypothetical, a mere creature of the mind, but a reality outside us and knowable as such. It is *Satya*, reality—not *Asatya*, unreality. It is *prakriti* (matter), not *purusha* (spirit or intelligence).

A further point of comparison or contrast is that, while Ramanuja postulated the existence of a Personal God loving and being loved, the object of worship, and the bestower of blessings on His creatures, Sankara's doctrine is a kind of pantheistic monism fit only for the rare *jnani*. Brahman is the only reality; there is no separate Jiva; and the world of matter is only an illusory emanation of Brahman. Says a famous *sloka*, ascribed to Sankara himself :—

" ब्रह्म सत्यं जगन्मिथ्या जीवो ब्रह्मैव नापरः ।
अनेन वेद्यं सच्छास्त्रं इति वेदान्तडिण्डिमः ॥ "

" బ్రహ్మ సత్యం జగన్మిథ్యా జీవో బ్రహ్మైవ నాపరః ।
అనేన వేద్యం సచ్ఛాస్త్రం ఇతి వేదాన్తడిణ్డిమః ॥ "

Sankara's doctrine is many-sided, and it would be a mistake to attend to one aspect of it only. It should never be forgotten that Sankara's *advaita-Vada* is intimately and inseparably associated with his *Saguna Vada*. According to him, there are two kinds of Mukti,—

" सद्योमुक्तिः । "
" సద్యోముక్తిః । "

release here after acquiring *jnana*, without taking another body or going to another world; and

" क्रममुक्तिः । "
" క్రమముక్తిః । "

gradual release after going to Brahma-loka through devout meditation on a Personal God. It is this latter that is accessible to all, and so in practice we are all—or almost all—of us followers of Visishtadvaita. No one is compelled to make the attempt to realise the one Reality even while here. Such is the privilege of the few who gird up their loins for the making of this attempt. Nor, at the same time, is it so easy to attain to the devout emotion of Parabhakti, as some people suppose,—such a devotion to the Lord as is prescribed in the following verse of the Gita (VIII. 14):—

" अनन्यचेताः सततं यो मां स्मरति नित्यशः ।
तस्याहं सुलभः पार्थ नित्ययुक्तस्य योगिनः ॥ "
" అనన్యచేతాః సతతం యోమాం స్మరతి నిత్యశః ।
తస్యాహం సులభః పార్థ నిత్యయుక్తస్య యోగినః ॥ "

"He who, with a mind abstracted from all other objects, meditates on Me without intermission all his

life—by that Yogi, whose mind is thus ever restrained, O Partha, I am easily gained." How many of such do we see around us in daily life? If all are Bhaktas of Sri Krishna in this sense, the world we live in will be Vaikuntha itself, and not the hell, that it is at present. But our point is that in practice all Sankaras are Visishtadvaitis.

Some claim that, like Ramanuja, Sankara was a Vaishnava. It is, in the first place, difficult to see why emphasis should at all be laid on this circumstance. From Vedic times, Aryas have been Saivas, or Vaishnavas, or both. One thing is certain,—there can be only one Supreme Isvara, whatever name we give him. The whole world has been fighting about names and brought discredit to the cause of religious truth. Sectarian bigotry and propagandism has filled the world with strife, misery, and bloodshed. They have broken human hearts, produced hatred where love ought to prevail, and divided those whom God has united by the blood-bond and destined for a life of mutual help and service. The Caste-system of the Hindus has been in this respect at least a blessing to humanity. A Hindu is born, not made, and so we make no converts of the followers of other religions. In the past history of India, however, there have been conversions among Hindus themselves from one form of Hinduism to another. At present, however, activity in the making of converts is no longer a living phase of social life among Hindus, and certainly we need not regret its disappearance. Let us return from this digression. Was Sankara a Vaishnava or Saiva? None of his works enable us to answer the question definitely. In his Gita-bhashya, he invariably speaks of Vishnu as Isvara, the Supreme Personal God. Similarly, in the Pancharatradhikarana, consistently

with the position taken by him in the Gita, he speaks of Narayana as Paramatma, Sarvotma higher than Avyakta, &c. In the Kenopanishad-bhashya, when he enumerates the various forms of the Personal God (*Upasya-brahman*, the object of devout meditation) he alternatively mentions Brahma, Vishnu, Siva, Indra, &c. In the Kathopaniskad, when he explains the famous verse,

" सोऽध्वनः पारमाप्नोति
तद्विष्णोः परमंपदम् ॥ "
" సోఽధ్వనః పారమాప్నోతి
తద్విష్ణోః పరమంపదమ్ ॥ "

as referring to Mukti (liberation from Samsara) he explains "*Vishnoh*" as

" व्यापनशीलस्य ब्रह्मणः । "
" వ్యాపనశీలస్య బ్రహ్మణః । "

, and *Padam* as

" स्थानं, सतत्वम् । "
" స్థానం, సతత్వమ్ । "

So he explains it as equivalent to what he calls elsewhere

" सर्वात्मभावः । "
" సర్వాత్మభావః । "

as the self of all existence. He no doubt also adds

" वासुदेवाख्यस्य । "
" వాసుదేవాఖ్యస్య । "

but as it is used synonymously with

" विष्णोः । "

" విష్ణోః । "

as already explained, it must be understood not as referring to the Personal God, but as equivalent to the Absolute Brahman. Vasudeva has here therefore to be explained (as it is explained by Sankara's comentators) as follows:—

" वासयति भूतानि स्वस्मिन्निति वासुः
सचासौदेवश्च दीव्यतइति स्वप्रकाशः स वासुदेवः ॥ "

" వాసయతి భూతాని స్వస్మిన్నితి వాసుః
సచాసౌదేవశ్చ దీవ్యతఇతి స్వప్రకాశః సవాసుదేవః ॥ "

Vasudeva is thus explained as meaning the one existence which is of the nature of self-effulgence and which is the support and dwelling-place of all beings. Nor is the derivation a mere fancy of the ingenious Indian commentator. For, an old Upanishad known to Sankara,—the Amrita-bindu Upanishad—after speaking of Brahman as

" निष्कलं निश्चलं शान्तम् । "

" నిష్కలం నిశ్చలం శాన్తమ్ । "

also calls him by the name of Vasudeva and derives the name as follows:—

" सर्वभूताधिवासं यद्भूतेषु च वसत्यपि ।
सर्वानुग्राहकत्वेन तदस्म्यहं वासुदेवः ॥ "

" సర్వభూతాధివాసం యద్భూతేషుచవసత్యపి ।
సర్వానుగ్రాహకత్వేన తదస్మ్యహం వాసుదేవః ॥ "

"The Supreme self which is both the *adhara* and *adheya*, the support of all phenomenal existence and the phenomenal existence itself which is supported—the one self-effulgence by which all else lives and thrives—is called Vasudeva and that am I"

The Vaishnavism of Sri Ramanuja has had the effect of largely reducing the ritualism of his followers. This circumstance has also to a large extent affected, by the influence of example, the practical religious life, though not the merely theoretical position, of the followers of Sankara. Everywhere Hindu ritualism has been on the decline,—a decline which has done much harm both to the religious life and the secular prosperity of the motherland. Nor are we free from blame for disobeying the express injunctions of the Lord as contained in the Gita, III, 10, 11.

" सहयज्ञाः प्रजास्सृष्ट्वा पुरोवाच प्रजापतिः ।
अनेनप्रसविष्यध्वमेषवोऽस्त्विष्टकामधुक् ॥
देवान्भावयतानेन तेदेवाभावयन्तुवः ।
परस्परं भावयन्तः श्रेयःपरमवाप्स्यथ ॥ "

" సహయజ్ఞాః ప్రజాస్సృష్ట్వా పురోవాచ ప్రజాపతిః ।
అనేనప్రసవిష్యధ్వమేషవోఽస్త్విష్టకామధుక్ ॥
దేవాన్ భావయతానేన తేదేవాభావయన్తువః ।
పరస్పరం భావయన్తః శ్రేయఃపరమవాప్స్యథ ॥ "

"The Lord of creatures, having at the beginning (of creation) created them along with sacrifice, thus spoke, "Do ye prosper by this (sacrifice); it will secure to you all you desire. By this (sacrifice) bestow prosperity on Devas, and may they grant you what gives you satisfaction.

By mutual help, you shall attain the highest good." It seems unquestionable that the sufferings and vicissitudes of the holy land are due to our neglect of the sacrificial part of our great Aryan faith. The Devas have withdrawn their help from us as we have deserted them and failed to propitiate and worship them for what they bestow on us and what they hold in trust with them for our benefit. They are the Lord's appointed channels for the bestowal on us of all worldly gifts and blessings. Neither Sankara nor Ramanuja is responsible for the culpable neglect of the Karma-Kanda by the Brahmins. Vedic ritualism is not dead, but has long been in a state, if not of suspended animation—at least of decayed vitality. Some hold that Sankara contended against the exclusive ceremonialism of the Mimamsaka school, and to him is due the decay of Vedic ceremonialism. But it is certain that there never has been a separate school or sect of Mimamsakas in India, as there never has been a separate set of men belonging to the Sankhya, Vaiseshika, or Nyaya school. There are some, even among Indian scholars, who, like Colonel Jacob, a Western Orientalist, hold that "whilst the other five schools have well-nigh ceased to exert any appreciable influence, the Vedanta has overspread the whole land, overgrown the whole Hindu mind and life." In truth, however, the other five schools or Darsanas have never had any greater influence than now. They were devised simply as aids to the perfect training of the students of Vedanta,—that is, they were all put forward as one-sided theories, and all that could be stated in support of them was stated by the Rishis only to be refuted in the Vedanta, the sole and final and absolute religion of Vedic revelation. There has never been in India a separate sect, school, or fraternity devoted to any of these systems. As the sage

Brihaspati enunciated and systematised Indian materialism without being a materialist himself, so also our Rishis formulated these five schools of philosophy or *darsanas* as the purely intellectual products of their constructive genius. Vyasa and Vachaspati have interpreted the Yoga system, without being themselves followers of the Yoga theory of the categories of existence. Vachaspati Misra's was a versatile genius which could master and expound every great system of Indian thought, but at the same time he was the mightiest of all who have given their whole-hearted allegiance to the Advaita-Vada of Sankara. In the Ramayana, Jabali propounded atheistic doctrines, but was a Vedantin himself. This is a method peculiar to Indian sages and thinkers. Our sages place themselves in the point of view peculiar to alien systems of thought and expound them in the manner of an avowed and ardent advocate, but they do not thereby declare themselves in their favour. So it has been with Jaimini, Sabara Swamin, Kumarila Bhatta and other expounders of the Purva Mimamsa School. Neither Sankara nor Ramanuja has condemned Vedic ritualism or endeavoured to diminish its influence in the social or national life of the Indian people. Sri Krishna has said even of the *jnani*, Gita (III. 25):—

"सक्ताऽकर्मण्यविद्वांसो यथा कुर्वन्ति भारत ।
कुर्याद्विद्वांस्तथासक्त श्चिकीर्षु र्लोकसंग्रहम ॥"

"సక్తాఃకర్మణ్యవిద్వాంసో యథా కుర్వన్తి భారత ।
కుర్యాద్విద్వాంస్తథాసక్త శ్చికీర్షు ర్లోకసంగ్రహమ్ ॥"

"As the man who has no knowledge (of the self) does Karma with attachment (to result) so he who has such knowledge should do Karma without attachment and

from a desire to prevent the world from following the path of undesirable (*unshastraic*) activity."

We may, finally, deal with an idea that is abroad, *viz.*, that while in Ramanuja's system the individuality of the Jiva is preserved, in Sankara's system the Jiva is absorbed into the one existence and so loses his personality. This view is founded on a thorough misapprehension of Sankara's doctrine. In that doctrine, there is only one ultimate and absolute existence. Hence there can be no absorption. For absorption implies the triplicity of the absorber, the absorbed, and the act of absorption. There is no real Jiva in separation from the Supreme Atman. We must never forget the distinction in Sankara's system between the standpoint of phenomenal limitation common to all of us and that of the noumenal or absolute existence which is special to the *jnani*. It is the latter standpoint that forms Sankara's speciality, and to one who can vividly realise it absorption is an impossibility as implying a triplicity of existence which is entirely foreign to Sankara's doctirine. In other respects the entire system of Ramanuja is acceptable to all Sankaras; and so, if the fact of absorption of the personality of Jiva cannot be brought forward as an objection to Ramanuja's system, it is equally inapplicable to Sankara.

In connection with this doctrine of the one Absolute existence which has no attributes and is beyond all variations and limitations of time and place, India has a special mission to the rest of the world. We have already referred to the speciality of India as the teacher of the doctrines of "the omnipenetrativeness of God and the solidarity of man." These doctrines are common to almost all schools of Indian religious thought, and Sankara's doctrine of *Vyavahara* (phenomenal existence)

brings him fairly into line with all other Indian teachers and religious schools. But Sankara's speciality—his doctrine of the one existence—gives him a special claim for a hearing and influence in the West. We are entitled to make this claim for him on account of the vogue which his system has enjoyed there till now. No doubt this is largely due to accident. Now that the Sri-bhasya of Sri Ramanuja is available in an English translation, we may hope that in the future his influence will extend among Western thinkers and Orientalists. None will more rejoice at this extension of the Vedic religion of Sri Ramanuja than those who here belong to the school of Sankara,—for the *Saguna-Vada* is as essential to us as the *Nirguna-Vada.* There are no greater *bhaktas* of Vishnu than are to be found even to-day among the followers of the Advaita doctrine. Still there is ample reason to believe that Sankara's influence will spread in the future in the West as it has done hitherto. Not only are the elaborate and valuable German translations and expositions of Dr. Deussen and their renderings into other European languages evidence of this fact, but the opinions of a man like the late Professor Max Muller—opinions, however, which we cannot wholly endorse—may also be considered in this connection. He says:—"In India alone the human mind has soared beyond this point (*i.e.*, the anthropomorphic idea of God) at first by guesses and postulates such as we find in some of the Upanishads, afterwards by strict reasoning, such as we find in the Vedanta-Sutras, and still more in the commentary of Sankara. The Vedanta, whether we call it a religion or a philosophy, has completely broken with the effete anthropomorphic conception of God and of the soul as approaching the throne of God, and has opened vistas which were unknown to the greatest thinkers of Europe." And

again:—"From a purely logical point of view, Sankara's position seems to be impregnable, and when so rigorous a logician as Schopenhauer declares his complete submission to Sankara's arguments, there is no fear of their being upset by other logicians." We cannot agree to some of the views herein set forth. That goes without saying. We cannot agree that either Vyasa or Sankara arrives at any conclusion by mere ratiocination. Both rely on the Sruti as the basis of their Vedanta doctrine, and all their argumentation is intended only to develop the arguments contained in the Sruti and establish its conclusions and doctrines. We cannot also agree to the statement that the Personal God of the Advaitin, or Visihtadvaitin, or indeed of any other school of Indian religious thought can be justly called "an anthropomorphic conception of God." All Hindus base their doctrines and beliefs on Pramanas or accepted sources of knowledge. Our doctrine of a Personal God is not derived from our own inner conceptions or cogitations, but from the Veda which we regard as the eternal source of all our knowledge regarding extra-mundane things and beings. No Hindu can, therefore, agree to the statement that we have formed our conception of a Personal God from our knowledge and exeprience of the characteristics of human beings. What we believe concerning God as revealed in the Veda is,—not that man has created God after his own likeness, but that God has created man after His likeness. In fact, we believe that both are eternal and that both are souls. Creation is not with us a springing of something out of nothing, but simply the investing of the soul with a body suitable to its stage of spiritual evolution. Apart from these objections, however, there is much truth in Professor Max Muller's statement that there are thinking minds in

Europe and America to whom the Advaitic conception of Pure Being—the one Reality, absolute and attributeless, without a second—the Sat-Chit-Ananda, as we call it,—a conception far above the purely negative conceptions of the Noumenon yet reached in the West—can successfully appeal; and we can appeal to such minds through the powerful and cogent reasonings which find a place in the system of Sankara. It is, therefore, necessary that Hindus should maintain their tradition of Advaita doctrine quite as much as that of the Bhagavata School of Sri Ramanuja. Just as the West is influencing the East by its material acquisitions, so the East must influence the West by its spiritual acquisitions. No educated Hindu worth the name can be indifferent to the religious and spiritual inheritance of the sages of old.

In all the vicissitudes we have passed through, these two great Sampradayas—the Bhagavata Sampradaya and the Advaita Sampradaya—together with the Pasupata system of Srikantacharya have been to us in Southern India the great sources of national vitality, and they have also united us in the bonds of a close association of hearts with the rest of our Hindu brethern in this continent. A great historical authority has said, "It is on the religious life that nations repose." The religious life of India has had a continuity which loses itself in an antiquity which surpasses all human computation or comprehension. Throughout the ages that are past, the Vedic religion has been the unfailing common source of the beliefs and activities of the professors of every school or system of religion which has appealed to the hearts of our people. Neither political nor economic changes have turned us from unswerving faith either in the Vedas, or in Him from whom the Vedas have sprung and whom they reveal to us. On every side we see signs of unrest

and portents of coming change. What the future will bring we cannot foresee. But of one thing we may be sure--that India alone will continue to be recognised as the eternal fountain and reservoir of spirituality. We alone have never yet been the willing tools or slaves of materialism. Elsewhere, spirituality has at best been an emotional aspiration, or merely a postulate of the human intellect. Here alone it has been an experience—an experience, too, the origin of which has to be sought in a revelation which rests on the eternal basis of the Vedas and cannot be traced to any date or source having a merely historical significance. As we stand and take a retrospect of the history which lies behind us in our past, the mind quails before the enormous vistas of time which imagination conjures up to the view. The divine grace of Sri Krishna has alone saved us during all this immeasurable period of time, and the generations of our ancestors have handed down to us the torch of Vedic knowledge which He, in his eternal and infinite wisdom, entrusted to our first progenitors—the Rishis—for the sustentation of their prosperity in all the ages that have since passed away. Shall we prove false to the trust? Siren voices call upon us to desert our post; there are deserters, too, here and there; temptations abound everywhere. But remember the lessons of the past. Assyria, Greece, and Rome, where are they? But we remain,—the eldest of the children of the Lord. What has preserved us except it be the same grace as entrusted the torch of Vedic wisdom into our hands?. Shall we, or shall we not pass on the torch to those who are to succeed us? History points to the dim eras of antiquity when the Hindus prospered in larger numbers than we can now count and over a vaster area than we now inhabit. Many others have since risen and passed away

so that the places which knew them shall know them no more. But we remain the heirs of all the ages that are past, and we shall remain, it may be, the inheritors of a remoter future than we are now able distinctly to conceive. Who knows the possibilities of that future? It may be one of recovery and renovation to such an extent that the Holy Land may yet again clothe herself in all the glory of a civilisation nobler than any the world has yet seen. To prepare the way for the coming on of such a civilisation is a mission greater than any we can yet conceive. To cast out the impediments on the way, to give the coup to the recrudescence from time to time of non-Vedic religious ideals of all kinds, to guard the rich treasure of all Vedic ideals from baser admixture, to sternly smite the foes of superstition, credulity and legerdemain, to gain material prosperity and political freedom by co-operating with our rulers in every effort for strengthening the fibres of Indian civilisation and unity—these are the duties which lie before us now and for a long time to come. The mighty personality and glowing inspiration of Sri Ramanuja-charya and, I will add, of Sri Sankaracharya and other great Indian teachers with Bhagavan Badarayana shining at their head in all the unspeakable effulgence of his matchless glory—these alone can endow us with the strength, the persistency, and the endurance needed for carrying out all the work that lies before us and those who are to come after us. History and literature combine to place beyond a doubt that, as a people, we love truth, reason, justice and virtue. We must never allow true faith, true reason, or true virtue to be overpowered by the impulses or attractions of the moment and never desert the old tricolor flag of Indian purity, Indian piety and Indian sanity. The solid work of generations has to

be intelligently co-ordinated and concentrated on the great aim of national revival. The rebuilding of the national temple is not, in my view, yet begun. It is only beginning, and a great army of workers is preparing for field-work, for the work of pioneering and for the laying of foundations. Stone after stone has to be laid, and the entire plan of the great architect has to be carried out. There is no question that the work will be done, and that the workers of the present and the future will succeed in their great task of national reconstruction and of planting on the crown of the edifice, when it is completed, the eternal banner of Indian righteousness and Indian spirituality. For there is ever marching at their head the eternal standard-bearer of our eternal Aryan nationality. His is the name, his the influence, his the light and leading which have been our strength, our bulwark, and our inspiration. He shone sweetly and gloriously once on the Indian firmament some thousands of years ago. His is still the highest, the holiest and the most captivating of all the influences that bind us to our past and our future. The day of glory will again assuredly dawn on this land when the adored of the Gopis and the Rishi-Patnis will again march forth at the head of His chosen people as the eternal standard-bearer and leader of their holy mission on earth. That will once again be true which Sri Suka-deva sang of the Lord in His own blessed time,—

" तासामाविरभूच्छौरिः स्मयमानमुखांबुजः ।
पीतांबरधरः स्रग्वी साक्षान्मन्मथमन्मथः ॥ "

" తాసామావిరభూచ్ఛౌరిః స్మయమానముఖాంబుజః ।
పీతాంబరధరః స్రగ్వీ సాక్షాన్మన్మథమన్మథః ॥ "

The Chairman's Speech.

At the conclusion of the lecture Mr. Chakravarthi delivered the following speech:—

The function which we are celebrating here this evening is, as you all know, a two-fold one. In the first place we are celebrating the anniversary of the birth of Lord Ramanuja—one of the greatest of spiritual teachers and religious reformers which the world has ever produced. In the second place we are celebrating the origin of some works which shew how the spirit of Lord Ramanuja finds practical expression through some of his followers even to the present day—I refer to the Srinivasa Mandiram and the other institutions, which have clustered round it. These other institutions, as most of you may be aware, consist of an Orphanage, a Library with a Reading Room and a Ladies' Section; and they all owe their origin and continued existence, it must be admitted, in the face of great indifference on the part of some of us—to the indefatigable labours and indomitable energy of our worthy citizen and esteemed friend Mr. A. Gopalacharlu.

Appropriateness of the Celebration.

These institutions, it has been a source of great pleasure to me to observe, are gradually making their influence felt on the social, intellectual and spiritual life of both the male and female sections of the enlightened community of Bangalore. And as the months roll by and the time for celebrating this anniversary comes round, we look forward to it as one of the well established and one of the most delightful events in what may be

described as the socio-spiritual programme of this City. Indeed, Ladies and Gentlemen, to my mind there is a striking significance and a most peculiar appropriateness in our celebrating the birth of Lord Ramanuja at this time of the year within the Province of Mysore. For it is at this season that, after a series of dry and rainless months, we at last begin to get these cool and blissful showers which change the very face of nature and make everything round us so fresh and full of life, so happy and serenely beautiful. And who does not know that the advent of Lord Ramanuja in the spiritual world, with his glorious message of *Bhakti* for the Supreme Being and love for all, converted thousands of hearts from dry and barren waste into regions full of the finest flowers of bliss and ecstatic devotion?

Successful Anniversaries in the Past.

The endeavours of our esteemed friend Mr. A. Gopalacharlu to make these annual gatherings as interesting and as instructive as possible to the educated communities of this City have, in my humble opinion, proved eminently successful. Year before last, as most of you may remember, we listened on the occasion of this anniversary to a very deep and thoughtful address on the origin and progress of Vaishnavism from one of the most erudite scholars of the Madras Presidency. Last year, we had the exceptionally good fortune of welcoming as the lecturer at this anniversary, no less a personage than that great and gifted lady whose beneficent influence is destined to remain as an abiding landmark in the history of the intellectual and spiritual regeneration of this country. And this year, I feel that I am voicing the feelings of everyone in this large and representative gathering when I say that we are no less fortunate in having as

our lecturer my esteemed and learned friend Prof. K. Sundararama Iyer of Kumbakonam. We have all just listened with rapt attention to his eloquent and impressive address on "The Place of Ramanuja in the Story of India." Ladies and gentlemen, I do not exactly know with what feelings you have been listening to that excellent and admirable address. As for myself, the loud and prolonged cheering which you raised as he resumed his seat at the conclusion of his address seemed to rouse me rather roughly from a sweet and beautiful dream—a dream in the course of which I was following a white and spotless angel into the higher and higher regions of a pure and fragrant atmosphere under the transparent dome of the deep blue infinite sky!

Spiritual Influence of Ramanuja.

Yes, my friends, I make no attempt to conceal the fact that I was carried away. For who is not carried away when he hears so ably and so eloquently explained any phase whatsoever of a character so great and glorious as that of Lord Ramanuja—Ramanuja the expounder of the *Bisishtadwaita* system of Philosophy, Ramanuja, the reconciler of the diverging Vedic texts, Ramanuja the blessed harbinger of the message of *bhakti* and love, Ramanuja the purest of the pure, Ramanuja of the broadest and the deepest sympathies which made his heart go forth in sympathy to the fallen and untouchable Panchamas. Indeed, gentlemen, when I come to think of all the incidents of that great and divine career, I cannot help feeling that even if it were for this one figure alone, the land in which he has lived and taught would command the highest respect and admiration of all the nations of the world. But the glory of Ramanuja is not diminished but rather enhanced by the fact that he is not

a solitary star that has adorned our firmament—he is not the only teacher who has gone forth, torch in hand, to the teeming millions of this country. Sree Sankaracharya, Sree Madhwacharya, Sree Chaitanya Deva and a number of other ardent and remarkable teachers have enriched the spiritual life of the country throughout the middle ages. In modern times, the number of our great spiritual teachers have undoubtedly fallen off; but the appearance of men like Ram Mohan Roy and Keshab Chandra Sen, like the divine Ramakrishna Paramahamsa and his gifted disciple the great Swami Vivekananda prove to the world that the spiritual life of India is not yet doomed to destruction, and that amidst the sin and confusion of a period of intellectual transition, there is sufficient spirituality left in the country to resist successfully the apparently irresistible advance of the roaring tide of materialism.

Vitality of Hinduism.

Herein lies the secret of the amazing vitality of Hinduism—herein the explanation of why Hindu Religion, Hindu Civilization and Hindu Society in their intimate and indissoluble union have surmounted so many difficulties and survived through so many vicissitudes. It is the vitalizing influence of great spiritual teachers of the stamp of Ramanuja who have arisen in India from time to time that has made it possible for Hinduism to live with so little essential change through so many long centuries of violent strain and stress. Where are to-day the ancient civilizations of Egypt and Assyria—of Persia, of Greece, of Rome? They all had their day, they had their origin and the period of their glory; but they have now for ever disappeared from the scene of their actions—for ever made

their exit from the theatre of the world wherein they played their part. It is the grand fabric of Hinduism alone which has defied the destroying hand of time, which has lived essentially intact through all ages. And I repeat that it is the influence of the great spiritual teachers of India—amongst whom Lord Ramanuja stands in the very foremost rank—which has made possible this unique phenomenon in the whole range of history.

Mission of Ramanuja.

This, as the lecturer has so well demonstrated to us, is the correct method of realizing the mission of the great spiritual teachers of India—*viz.*, the imparting of a fresh and life-giving current into the arteries of Hinduism as a whole, and through it into the arteries of the spiritual fabric of the whole of the human race. You cannot realize what Ramanuja did for India and for Hinduism by simply counting the number of his immediate followers; you cannot realize what Ramanuja did for mankind and for the whole world by simply counting the number of fore-heads which to-day bear the distinguishing mark of his sect. No one will deny that the followers of Ramanuja constitute in themselves a very great sect and count amongst their number some of the most remarkable Indians in every walk of life. But what I mean to say is that you can never fully appreciate a character so great and so glorious as that of Lord Ramanuja if you look at it merely from the narrow stand-point of sect. There may be indeed thousands and tens of thousands who have derived spiritual light and spiritual solace by being converted to the doctrines of Ramanuja. But who will count the millions and tens of millions who from without the narrow sectarian enclosure have come consciously or

unconsciously under the influnce of his divine character and derived hope and strength in the battle of life from his sublime and inspired teachings?

Physical Illustration.

In common conversation we frequently speak of the magnetic influence of a great personality, and let us consider for a moment what actually happens in the physical world when we deal with a large powerful magnet. Most of you may have been inside a physical laboratory and may have watched students of physics at work at their tables; and you must have observed how, when a powerful magnet starts into existence and begins to exercise its force within its field, it is impossible to prevent a number of filings in the immediate vicinity from rushing to the pole and forming a cluster round it. But we shall be far indeed from correctly realizing the full influence of the magnet if we confine our vision to the cluster round the pole alone. Cast your eyes into other parts of the field and you will find how, even in the remotest corners, inertness has given place to life, disorder to order, chaos and confusion to beauty and symmetry of form. Those who have seen this simple physical experiment will not have the least difficulty in understanding how the influence of a great character like Ramanuja is bound to be felt far and wide—far indeed beyond the narrow circle of his orthodox and immediate followers.

Historical View of Sectarianism.

I have ventured to place before you this simple physical illustration because there are some amongst us who never cease to deplore the multiplicity of religious sects in India. These estimable gentlemen are inclined to ascribe nearly all the evils which can be found anywhere in the country to this multiplicity of religious

sects. To my mind they take a rather narrow view of things and apparently forget that every sect which we now see in the country is only the cluster round the pole of a powerful magnet whose general influence for good is discernable far and wide, throughout the entire length and breadth of the country. Now, ladies and gentlemen, I am no advocate of sectarianism—specially of sectarianism as it is sometimes preached and practised at the present day. But I do think, that those critics who ascribe nearly all the evils under the sun to sectarianism really go a little too far; and I cannot also help feeling that those who hope that the millennium may soon come when sectarianism will disappear from the face of the earth really run after the line bounding the earth and the sky which, as the poet says, allures from far but flies as we follow it. For my part I am content to take human nature as it is and it is likely to remain; and I rather like to rejoice in the fact that the difference between man and man is not a thousandth part of the difference that may have existed and that sectarianism is not a millionth part of the evil it might have been.

A Mathematical Calculation.

To illustrate the meaning of what I have just now said I will place before you a simple mathematical calculation. The population of the world, including men, women and children, according to the latest calculations, is somewhere between 1,800 and 1,900 millions. To be on the safe side and for facility of calculation we may take the number roundly at say 2,000 millions. Now suppose we print slips of paper with 31 questions relating to articles of faith or religious belief, the answer to each question being a simple 'yes' or 'no.' And suppose also

that we hand over to each inhabitant of the globe, without distinction of creed, colour, caste or age or sex, one of these slips with a request to fill up the answers according to the faith and religious belief of the holder. Incredible as it may seem at first sight it is a matter of simple calculation to prove that it would be possible for each man, woman or child to fill up the form in a different and distinctive way. In other words, even if the points of faith or belief on which a man might differ from another were not more than 31 in number, it would be possible for each inhabitant of the globe—each separate member of a family—to constitute a sect by himself. When to this you add the consideration that the number of points on which difference is possible really far greater than 31—which do you think is the point to be wondered at, *viz.*, that the number of sects in the world is so large, or that the number is so little?

Evils of Sectarianism.

Whatever evils may be said to belong to sectarianism do not, in my humble opinion, appertain to the essence of it, *viz.*, the honest difference of opinion between man and man on points of faith or religious belief. The whole evil lies in the unreasonable bias, impatient intolerance and unworthy bigotry which people allow in course of time to grow round themselves and their sects. It is the duty of every right-thinking man to free himself and his sect from such base and selfish feelings. If such unworthy feelings should cease to exist, we would at once see that it is as absurd to quarrel with a neighbour for difference in religious faith as it would be absurd to quarrel with him for difference in physical features. If such feelings of unreasonable bias and intolerance should give place to feelings of tolerance and mutual respect,

then the shackles which blind prejudice has forged round us in course of time in the name of faith and religion will gradually lose their grip and ultimately fall off, and leave a brother free again to help and uplift a brother. And if these feelings of tolerance and mutual respect should develop into feelings of warm sympathy and deep brotherly love, then there would be nothing to prevent the various sects in India from proceeding peacefully along the path of progress to the highest pinnacle of success and prosperity and renown.

Conclusion.

Let us all on the occasion of this blessed anniversary make up our mind to shake off all narrowness and prejudice and strive for the attainment of that desirable goal. And let us all, standing at the feet of Lord Ramanuja, with hearts beating in unison, pray to Him and to His adored Ranganatha that our efforts may be crowned with success and that their choicest blessings may descend on our own souls, on the institutions under the auspices of which we are gathered together this evening, on our beloved mother country, and on the whole of humanity and the whole of creation at large.

Then with a hearty vote of thanks to the Lecturer and the Chairman the proceedings terminated with three lusty cheers to His Majesty the King-Emperor, His Highness the Maharaja and His Highness the Yuvaraj of Mysore. Meanwhile Mr. Gopalacharlu garlanded some of the leading gentlemen that were seated on the platform.
